

Union Minister inaugurates Centre of Excellence for Seaweeds at ICAR-CMFRI Mandapam



Union Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying George Kurian has said that the designation of the Mandapam Regional Centre of ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) as a Centre of Excellence (CoE) would significantly boost the seaweed cultivation in India. He was speaking after inauguration of the CoE at CMFRI's Mandapam campus on Thursday. He said that the Union government had recently designated ICAR-CMFRI Mandapam as the Centre of Excellence for the holistic development and promotion of seaweed culture in the country.

Emphasising the crucial role played by ICAR-CMFRI in advancing marine fisheries and mariculture in the nation, the Minister said that this new development will further contribute to the comprehensive growth of the fisheries sector. The Minister also inaugurated the plantlet production unit for seaweed established at the Mandapam Centre under the CoE, followed by a visit to the various facilities at the centre such as Seaweed Plantlet Production Unit, Marine Hatchery Complex, National Marine Fish Brood Bank, Recirculatory Aquaculture System (RAS), sea cage farm, Green Tiger shrimp hatchery established under the PMMSY scheme, Marine Biodiversity Museum and Marine Aquarium.

Remarkable increase in fish production

During his interaction with fishers and fish farmers, Mr Kurian highlighted the remarkable increase in the country's fish production over the past decade, from 95.79 lakh tonnes to 175.45 lakh tonnes. He also mentioned the government's efforts to improve the sector through various schemes. Under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), he distributed 22 insulated vehicles in Ramanathapuram district alone to maintain cold chain facilities for quality maintenance of fishes with a subsidy of ₹1.47 crore. To enhance income and promote sustainable aquaculture, the government has introduced open sea cage farming for high-value fish species like seabass and cobia in the district. A subsidy of ₹9.91 lakh is provided under this scheme. To improve the efficiency and safety of traditional fishermen, the government is replacing wooden catamarans with FRP boats and 29 beneficiaries have already received these boats with a subsidy of ₹58.18 lakh", the Minister added.

The CMFRI Director Grinson George presided. Appreciating the efforts of Union Fisheries Department for the development of mariculture sector, he described the future plans of having a strong collaboration with the ICAR-National Research Centre for Banana, Thiruchirapalli, in seaweed tissue culture programmes. More than 150 fishers, fish farmers and seaweed farmers from Ramanathapuram and Pudukottai districts of Tamil Nadu attended the interactive meeting. They shared their experiences in seaweed farming and sea cage farming and also thanked the Union government, ICAR-CMFRI and Tamil Nadu State Fisheries Department for the various schemes and development initiatives being implemented for the sector.

They flagged some issues and their grievances to the Minister for which he assured support to resolve the same. Principal Scientist and Head, Mandapam RC of ICAR-CMFRI. K. Vinod and senior scientist B. Johnson spoke on the occasion. Director, NRC Banana R. Selvarajan and Dr. Dileep Kumar, Chairman, Research Advisory Committee (RAC) of ICAR-CMFRI and among others attended the function.